

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Nicholls et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,662,232). Applicants traverse the rejection because the cited reference does not teach or suggest, among other things, a key information extraction means for examining a subject line or body (i.e., a message text portion) of an e-mail message, as now recited in independent claims 1 and 7.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner asserts that Applicants failed to explain why Nicholls does not meet the limitation that the key information extraction means is recited for examining the title or body of an e-mail message. The Examiner further asserts that there was no attempt by Applicants to point out how the claim patentably distinguishes over the prior art, and therefore Applicants arguments do not amount to a separate argument for patentability. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner.

In Response D, Applicants cited specific portions of Nicholls (e.g. Col. 3, lns. 16-21 and Col. 4, lns. 48-52, and Col. 4, line 55 to Col. 5, line 13) as teaching the operation of Nicholls. More specifically, Applicants showed that Nicholls discloses converting and/or retransmitting of e-mail messages based upon a subscriber's criteria. More importantly, Applicants described the process of Nicholls wherein a user identification (e.g., allport@work.com), or a domain name "PB Ltd" (e.g. scottbr@PB Ltd.com) is used by Nicholls to identify e-mails that are to be converted and/or retransmitted. Furthermore, Applicants

asserted that Nicholls teaches keyword information extraction of the user identification portion or domain name portion of a header of an e-mail message.

Although Applicants believe that “title” is sufficiently distinguishable over the teachings of Nicholls, Applicants further clarified claims 1 and 7 to define the key information extraction means as examining the “subject line” or body of an e-mail message received by the reception means. Nicholls fails to disclose a key information extraction means for examining the subject line of an e-mail message. Moreover, Nicholls fails to disclose or suggest a key information extraction means for examining a body (i.e., a message text portion) of an e-mail message. Rather, Nicholls merely converts and/or reroutes e-mail messages based on the header (i.e., “To:” and “From:”) of an e-mail message.

This is a distinction with a difference, because Nicholls cannot achieve the advantages of the present invention. That is, Nicholls merely allows conversion and/or rerouting of e-mails to fax, alternative e-mail addresses, or telephones. Nicholls cannot distinguish between an important or non-important message from a particular sender. That is, Nichols considers all messages as important from a particular designated sender, which can be identified based on the user identification or domain name. Accordingly, all e-mail messages having the domain name “PBltd” will be transmitted by Nicholls.

In contrast, the present invention employs keywords in the subject line or body of an e-mail to identify a message as important. That is, keywords can be typed into a subject line that describes the message (See Applicants’ specification page 15, lines 10-24).

Alternatively, the location of the keyword is not restricted to the subject line of the message, but can be inserted in the body (i.e., text message part) of the e-mail (See Applicants' specification page 29, lines 15-21). Therefore, the present invention can distinguish between urgent and non-urgent messages based on the keyword (or lack thereof) in the subject line or body of the e-mail message. More importantly, messages from a common user identification or domain name can be sorted, unlike Nicholls, which routes all common domain name or user identification e-mails regardless of their urgency. Since Nicholls cannot achieve this sorting feature, withdrawal of the §102 rejection of independent claims 1 and 7 is respectfully requested.

Since claims 2 and 4 depend upon claim 1, they necessarily include all of the features of their associated independent claim plus other additional features. Thus, Applicants submit that the §102 rejection of claims 2 and 4 has also been overcome for the same reasons mentioned above to overcome the rejection of independent claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that the §102 rejection of claims 2 and 4 also be withdrawn.

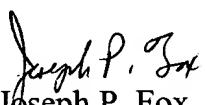
Claims 5-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Nicholls, in view of Fujiwara (U.S. Patent No. 6,301,710). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons recited above with respect to the rejection to independent claim 1. More particularly, the Fujiwara reference is merely cited by the Examiner for teaching that programs can be pre-stored or downloaded as a matter of design choice. More specifically, Fujiwara fails to overcome the deficiencies of the Nicholls reference with respect to teaching

or suggesting a keyword information extraction means for examining the subject line or body of the e-mail message that is capable of sorting e-mails from a common domain name or user identification. For this reason, withdrawal of the §103 rejection of dependent claims 5-6 is respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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